

## Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 SAIGON 02532 01 OF 02 071347Z

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

AID-05 IO-10 OMB-01 SAM-01 SAJ-01 BIB-01 NIC-01 DPW-01

EUR-12 SR-02 ORM-01 EB-07 TRSE-00 IGA-01 (ISO) W

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R 070920Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3372

INFO AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

CINCPAC

USDEL JEC PARIS

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 2532

DEPT PASS IMMEDIATE IBS/NCA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, VS

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT THIEU INTERVIEW WITH JAPANESE NEWSMEN

1. FOLLOWING IS OFFICIAL ACCOUNT PROVIDED EMBASSY BY MINISTRY OF  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF TWO HOUR MEETING BETWEEN PRESIDENT NGUYEN VAN THIEU

AND TWELVE REPRESENTATIVES IN SAIGON OF JAPANESE NEWSPAPERS,  
NEWS AGENCIES, TELEVISION AND RADIO ON MARCH 5, 1975. FOLLOWING  
TEXT HAS BEEN SENT BY MFA TO ALL GVN DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS.  
BEGIN TEXT

2. JAPAN'S ROLE IN PRESENT VIETNAM CONTEXT. PRES THIEU DISCLOSED  
AT TIME OF PARIS NEGOTIATIONS HE HAD SUGGESTED THAT JAPAN BE PART  
OF ICCS BUT THAT COMMUNISTS REFUSED. NOW PRES THIEU WILL WELCOME  
ANY EFFORT BY JAPAN TO HELP RESTORE PEACE, AWARE THAT JAPAN HAS  
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PAGE 02 SAIGON 02532 01 OF 02 071347Z

NO ARMY BUT JAPAN HAS GOOD ECONOMY. PEACE IN VIETNAM MEANS

PEACE IN ASIA, THAT IS, TRADE EXPANSION AND PROSPERITY FOR ASIA. PRES THIEU RECALLED JAPAN'S AID TO VIETNAM IN THE PAST TWO YEARS, HOPED JAPAN WILL IMPORT MORE FROM VIETNAM AND GRANT MORE DEVELOPMENT LOANS TO VIETNAM. PRES THIEU MENTIONED THERE IS LARGE FIELD FOR JAPAN-VIETNAM COOPERATION AS JAPAN HAS CAPITAL AND TECHNOLOGY AND VIETNAM HAS RESOURCES AND MANPOWER. ASKED WHETHER VIETNAM WILL SEVER RELATIONS WITH JAPAN IF JAPAN RECOGNIZES PRG PRES THIEU SAID THAT VIETNAM'S POLICY ON THIS SUBJECT IS CLEAR DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS ARE SEVERED WITH COUNTRIES WHICH GIVE RECOGNITION TO VIET CONG PRG AND THAT IN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES IF VIETNAM CANNOT KEEP THE PRG OUT THEN VIETNAM WALKS OUT. THAT IS THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE, HE SAID.

3. WILL PRES THIEU RUN AGAIN AT NEXT ELECTION? PRES THIEU SAID NOTHING PREVENTS HIM FROM RUNNING AGAIN BUT WHETHER HE WILL BE REELECTED OR NOT IS ANOTHER MATTER. PRES THIEU SAID HE HAD NOT MADE UP HIS MIND YET BUT WILL FIRST ASSESS RESULTS HE OBTAINS ON THREE POINTS: 1) ECONOMIC STABILITY. PRES THIEU SAID HE DID NOT EXPECT MIRACLE BUT ONLY SUCCESS IN KEEPING ECONOMIC CONDITIONS FROM TURNING WORSE. 2) HOW SUCCESSFULLY COMMUNIST AGGRESSION IS REPELLED. 3) HOW SUCCESSFUL IS ADMINISTRATION REFORM. PRES THIEU SAID RESULTS ON THESE THREE POINTS WILL SHAPE HIS DECISION. ASKED WHETHER HE IS THINKING OF ANY SORT OF PREPARATION, PRES THIEU LAUGHED AND SAID, "I DO NOT NEED IT, SOUTH VIETNAM DOES NOT NEED TO BE NOISY." HE ADDED IN HIS OPINION POLITICAL MANEUVERS DO NOT MATTER BUT RATHER THE CONFIDENCE FROM THE PEOPLE. " I DO NOT NEED TRICKS; I'LL DO THE JOB OF A MAN WHO FIGHTS FOR HIS COUNTRY NOT LIKE WHAT A POLITICIAN DOES IN A PEACEFUL COUNTRY." IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION PRES THIEU SAID THE PROBLEM OF HIS SUCCESSOR HAS NOT BEEN RAISED AND THE DEMOCRACY PARTY WILL LIKELY APPOINT A CANDIDATE WHEN HE DECIDES NOT TO RUN.

4. CORRUPTION. RECALLING HIS PROMISE TO ERADICATE CORRUPTION WITHIN THE ARMY AND THE CIVIL SERVANTS, PRES THIEU NOTED HE NEVER SAID HE WOULD ERADICATE CORRUPTION COMPLETELY BUT THAT HE WOULD WORK TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION AND THAT HE INDEED TOOK DRASTIC MEASURES WHICH HAD "GOOD IMPACT". PRES THIEU SAID UNLESS EVERYONE ALL OVER THE WORLD IS A BUDDHA CORRUPTION CANNOT BE ERADICATED. UNTIL THEN EVEN THE USA CAN-

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PAGE 03 SAIGON 02532 01 OF 02 071347Z

NOT UPROOT IT IN THEIR LAND. PRES THIEU SAID CORRUPTION IS UNAVOIDABLE IN A WAR-TORN COUNTRY INFLUENCED BY WORLD ECONOMIC CRISIS WHERE SALARIES ARE MODEST. HE CITED THE CASE OF NORTH VIETNAM WHERE PEACE HAS FOSTERED MORE VICES AND CORRUPTION LAZINESS AND BLACK MARKETS ARE SPREADING EVEN AMONG THE POLITICAL CADRES. ABOUT CORRUPTION CHARGES AGAINST HIMSELF PRES THIEU SAID THAT LIKE ALL CITIZENS HE IS SUBJECT TO THE NATIONAL LAW, THAT HE IS READY TO ANSWER ANY QUESTION OF THE CENSORATE ABOUT

HIS PROPERTIES, BUT HE CANNOT WASTE TIME TO REPUDIATE ALL THE CHARGES BECAUSE THE COMMUNISTS ARE LIKELY TO INVENT MORE CHARGES EACH DAY. PRES THIEU SAID PEOPLE KNOW HE IS NOT CORRUPT AND FURTHERMORE IF HE WERE CORRUPT HE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN AS STUPID AS TO BUY LAND BUT WOULD HAVE RATHER BOUGHT DIAMONDS OR OPENED BANK ACCOUNTS IN FOREIGN LANDS WHERE NOBODY WOULD SEE ANYTHING OF HIS WEALTH. HE SAID HE BOUGHT THE LAND AND RECLAIMED IT SO HE DID NOTHING WRONG. PRES THIEU SAID HE HAS NO CASTLES, NO HOUSES IN FRANCE, SWITZERLAND OR ANY FOREIGN COUNTRY.

5. NATIONAL ECONOMY. PRES THIEU SAID NATIONAL ECONOMY DEPENDS GREATLY ON TERRITORIAL SECURITY, THAT GOVERNMENT ENDEAVORS TO PREVENT COMMUNISTS FROM TAKING MORE LAND AND PEOPLE, THAT NATIONAL ECONOMY IS BASED ON FOOD PRODUCTION AND AGRICULTURE MORE THAN ON INDUSTRY. AGRICULTURE OFFERS THE BEST PROMISE FOR GOOD AND RAPID EXPORTATION; EVEN NOW GIVEN GOOD CONDITIONS VIETNAM CAN EXPORT RICE. PROSPECTS OF OIL ARE PROMISING BUT COMMERCIAL EXPLOITATION WILL BEGIN ONLY IN TWO OR THREE YEARS.

6. THIRD FORCE. PRES THIEU SAID THE SO-CALLED THIRD ELEMENT IS A PRODUCT OF THE FRENCH COLONIALISTS NOT THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT IN COLLUSION WITH COMMUNISTS. COLONIALISTS ARE OBSESSED BY VIETNAMESE POLITICIANS IN PARIS WHO CLAIM THEY HAVE A STRONG FORCE AND ARE ABLE TO FORM A GOVERNMENT. THE FRENCH BELIEVED THEM SO THEY SOLD THE IDEA TO RUSSIA AND DR. KISSINGER. ACCORDING TO TAD SZULC, RUSSIA ALSO DID NOT KNOW WHAT IT WAS ALL ABOUT AND BREZHNEV HAS ASTONISHED....

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 01 SAIGON 02532 02 OF 02 071357Z

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INFO AMCONSUL BIEN HOA  
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UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 2 SAIGON 2532

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THE COMMUNISTS WERE EMBARRASSED WHEN IT TURNED OUT THAT THE THIRD FORCE WAS NOT A REAL FORCE. PRES THIEU RECALLED INITIALLY THERE WAS TALK OF A COALITION GOVERNMENT WITH THREE COMPONENTS (RVN, THE COMMUNISTS, AND A THIRD FORCE). PRES THIEU REJECTED IDEA OF COALITION GOVERNMENT SO A THREE COMPONENT COUNCIL WAS AGREED UPON. ABOUT MEMBERS OF THIRD COMPONENT, PRES THIEU SUGGESTED EACH SIDE WILL CHOSE HALF THE NUMBER BUT THE COMMUNISTS REFUSED. ASKED ABOUT THE THIRD FORCE IN SOUTH

VIETNAM, PRES THIEU REPLIED, "WHERE DO YOU SEE IT." A JOURNALIST SUGGESTED BIG MINH. PRES THIEU REPEATED THAT THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM WILL IMMEDIATELY OBLIGE IF THE COMMUNISTS AGREE TO CHOSE HALF THE NUMBER AND LET SOUTH VIETNAM CHOSE THE OTHER HALF. WE CAN DO THAT WITHIN 24 HOURS, "SAID PRES THIEU.

7.DOES PRES THIEU HAVE ANY PLANS TO VISIT ANY COUNTRY OR HAS  
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 SAIGON 02532 02 OF 02 071357Z

BE BEEN INVITED BY A COUNTRY? PRES THIEU SAID HE HAS NO PLANS BECAUSE ELECTION TIME IS COMING AND TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY NOW IS NOT CONVENIENT. HOWEVER, IF INVITED, PRES THIEU WILL GO.

8. DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH COMMUNIST COUNTRIES. PRES THIEU SAID HE IS NOT AGAINST THE PRINCIPLE PROVIDED THE COMMUNISTS RESPECT VIETNAM'S SOVEREIGNTY. PRES THIEU SAID HE IS LIBERAL AND WANTS TO MAKE FRIENDS WITH ALL COUNTRIES BECAUSE THAT IS THE TRUE MEANING OF DETENTE.

9. CAMBODIAN SITUATION. ASKED TO COMMENT ON THE CRITICAL CONDITION OF CAMBODIA, PRES THIEU RECALLED THAT THREE TIMES NORTHER VIETNAM WAS ASKED TO WITHDRAW ITS TROOPS FROM LAOS (1954, 1962 AND 1974) BUT NEVER DID, THAT KHMER ROUGE ALON CANNOT SUSTAIN THE COMBAT AND WOULD HAVE ALREADY REACHED A POLITICAL SOLUTION WITH PRESIDENT LON NOL, THAT NORTH VIETNAM WANTS ALL OF CAMBODIA, THAT IF THE USA DOES NOT TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO DEFEND PHNOM PENH. PRES THIEU ADDED THAT IF CAMBODIA FALLS INTO COMMUNIST HANDS, THE COMMUNISTS WILL NOT DARE TO IMMEDIATELY ATTACK SOUTH VIETNAM BUT THAT IN THE LONG RUN

COMMUNIST LAOS AND COMMUNIST CAMBODIAN WILL BE A THREAT TO NEIGHBORING

SOUTH VIETNAM, THAILAND AND MALAYSIA. PRES THIEU ADDED THAT IF US ALLOWS COMMUNISTS TO TAKE OVER CAMBODIA, THE US IS THE LOSER AS WHO WILL NOW BELIEVE IN US COMMITMENTS IF THE USA ABANDON ITS ALLIES. ASKED ABOUT EVENTUAL AID FROM SOUTH VIETNAM, PRES THIEU SAID HE WANTS TO HELP THE REFUGEES WHO FLOCK TO OUR BORDER BUT THAT VIETNAM HAS NO PLAN NOR WISH TO INTERFERE WITH CAMBODIAN INTERNAL PROBLEMS AND BESIDES, PRES THIEU ASKED, WHAT CAN LITTLE VIETNAM DO WHEN A BIG POWER WITH MATERIAL MIGHT SUCH AS THE US REFUSES

TO TAKE ACTION?

10. ASKED FOR HIS OPINION ABOUT PRESIDENT FORD'S SUGGESTION A THREE-YEAR LIMIT TO AID TO VIETNAM, PRES THIEU SUGGESTED US PRES HAD USED THAT AS A POSSIBLE TIME FRAME FOR DISCUSSION. FOR INSTANCE, FOR PLANNING PURPOSES, ONE MUST BASE ON A CERTAIN LAW OF AVERAGES TO THINK THAT IF 1.6 BILLION IN MILITARY AID CAN BE SECURED FOR THREE OR FOUR YEARS, THE COMMUNISTS WILL GIVE UP BECAUSE NOT ONLY HANOI CANNOT GO ON FOREVER, EVEN THE SOVIET UNION AND RED CHINA CANNOT GO ON FOREVER.

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 SAIGON 02532 02 OF 02 071357Z

11. ASKED ABOUT US CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION'S RECOMMENDATION THAT DR. KISSINGER GET ON NEW NEGOTIATIONS WITH MOSCOW AND PEKING TO INSURE RESTRAINT AND REDUCTION OF AID TO HANOI, PRES THIEU SAID HE CONCURRED AND HAD INSISTED ON THIS A LONG TIME AGO. HANOI DOES NOT PRODUCE ARMS OR TANKS, IT IS FED WEAPONS OF WAR BY SOVIETS AND RED CHINA. CONSEQUENTLY, US SHOULD DEAL WITH MOSCOW AND PEKING ON PLANETARY LEVEL BECAUSE THAT IS BEYOND CAPACITY OF SMALL COUNTRY LIKE RVN. ALL MOVES, BY ANY COUNTRY INCLUDING JAPAN, WOULD BE WELCOME IF IT WORKS FOR STABILITY OF ASIA.

12. ASKED ABOUT CONGRESSIONAL VISIT, THIEU SAID THEIR VISIT TRANSCENDS THE 300 MILLION SUPPLEMENTAL AID QUESTION. HE WELCOMES THEM AS THEY COME TO WITNESS SOUTH VIETNAMESE DETERMINATION AND TO FIND ELEMENTS WITH WHICH TO BUILD LONG TERM POLICY FOR US. EVEN WITHOUT SUPPLEMENTAL AID, SVN WOULD STILL HAVE TO FIGHT ON.

13. ON QUESTION OF POLITICAL PRISONERS PRES THIEU DENIES EXISTENCE OF ANY, IF THAT MEANS SOME PEOPLE ARE PUT IN JAIL BECAUSE OF OPPOSITION TO THIEU. SUBTLE DIFFERENCES SHOULD BE MADE BETWEEN PEOPLE TEMPORARILY DETAINED FOR NATIONAL SECURITY REASONS AND POLITICAL PRISONERS. HE TAKES CASE OF SIRHAN SIRHAN AND ASKS "IS HE MURDERER OR POLITICAL PRISONER?" ALSO MENTIONS CONCENTRATION OF JAPANESE AMERICANS DURING WORLD WAR TWO.

14. ON DETENTE PRES THIEU SAID IT SHOULD MEAN US SHOULD USE

ITS VAST STORE OF LEVERAGE POWERS SUCH AS AID, TECHNOLOGY,  
TRADE AND GOOD TO DEMAND SOMETHING IN RETURN. IF IT SHOULD GIVE  
ONLY AND DEMAND NOTHING IN RETURN, THEN US IS PLAYING LOSER  
RPT LOSER AND ONCE COMMUNISTS WIN, THEY WILL NOT STOP.

15. ASKED ABOUT SO-CALLED CAO DAI'S PROPOSAL FOR MOVING LA  
CELLE ST CLOUD TALKS TO TAY NINH, PRES THIEU SAID CAO DAI  
SHOULD CONVINCE COMMUNISTS TO ACCEPT TALKING FIRST. SAYS  
COMMUNISTS ONLY ASK FOR OVERTHROW OF PRES THIEU HIMSELF AND  
OF LEGAL GOVERNMENT IN SVN. HE ASKS "HAVE I ASKED FOR REMOVAL OF  
PHAM VAN DONG OR NGUYEN HUU THO, OR FOR SCRAPPING OF NVN'S  
CONSTITUTION?. END TEXT  
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